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(71) Applicant: **ETHICON ENDO-SURGERY, INC.**
Cincinnati, Ohio 45242 (US)

(72) Inventor: **Shelton IV, Frederick E.**
Hillsboro, Ohio 45133 (US)

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(74) Representative: **Tunstall, Christopher Stephen et
al**
Carpmaels & Ransford,
43-45 Bloomsbury Square
London WC1A 2RA (GB)

(54) **Surgical instrument incorporating an electrically actuated articulation mechanism**

(57) A surgical instrument particularly suited to endoscopic use articulates an end effector by including an articulation mechanism in an elongate shaft that incorporates an electrically actuated polymer (EAP) actuator

for remotely articulating the end effector. In particular, a flexible neck to a frame of the elongate neck may be laterally urged to the left or right by EAP actuators and advantageously locked into an articulated state.

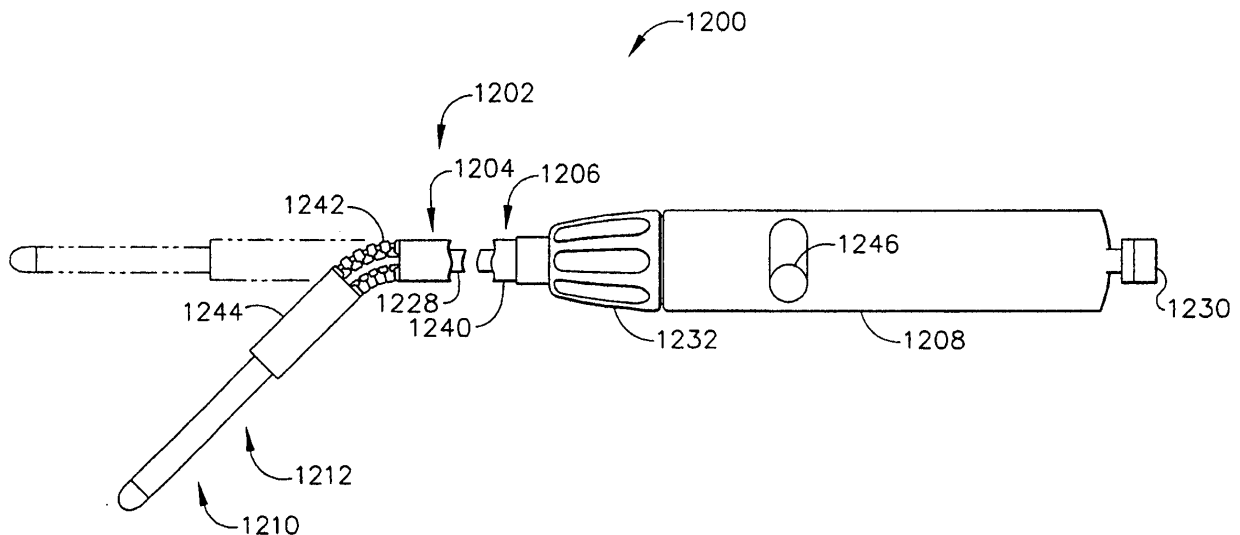


FIG. 1A



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Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)
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Y	* paragraphs [0101], [0183], [0184] * -----	1-11	
Y	EP 0 832 605 A (ETHICON) 1 April 1998 (1998-04-01) * the whole document * -----	1-11	
A	US 2003/069474 A1 (COUVILLON) 10 April 2003 (2003-04-10) * the whole document * -----	5-7	
A	US 5 673 841 A (SCHULZE) 7 October 1997 (1997-10-07) * column 28, line 50 - column 29, line 33; figures 45,46 * -----	8	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC)
			A61B
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
The Hague		15 December 2005	Barton, S
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	
X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document			

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ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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